

PRE-EMPTIBLES AND RESOURCES CORRESPONDENCE

LETTERS WHICH PASSED BETWEEN PREMIER SUTTON AND HIS
WILFRED LAURIER, AND LATER BETWEEN PREMIER SUTTON
AND PREMIER BORDEN ARE LAID ON TABLE OF HOUSE.

As announced in the speech from the throne, the government has laid before the legislative assembly the correspondence carried on with regard to the pre-emptible lands in the Northwest Territories. The letters which passed between Mr. Wilfred Laurier and Premier Borden, and later between Premier Borden and Mr. Wilfred Laurier, are laid on the table of the House.

The first letter was that written to Mr. Wilfred Laurier by Premier Borden on March 20th, 1911. This letter conveyed to the premier the government's policy on the pre-emptible lands in the Northwest Territories. It was dated December 15th, 1910, by the Alberta legislature, commencing the government of the province for entering into negotiations with the government of Canada relative to a measure of control of the public domain and advising further negotiations in the matter.

Mr. Wilfred Laurier's reply to this letter was written on August 7th, following discussion with Premier Borden, stating that he had not sent it earlier because he had been consulting Mr. Oliver before the letter left for the west. He had kept the matter for consultation with him on his return, had done so, and Mr. Oliver had agreed with him in the line set down in the answer of August 7th. Mr. Wilfred Laurier commences the letter by stating that he is glad that the claims of the province are worthy of serious consideration.

In his answer Premier Borden addressed a letter to Premier Laurier, enclosing the resolution of the legislature and a copy of the letter to Mr. Wilfred Laurier, also calling his attention to the statements he had made with regard to provincial control of natural resources.

The letters of the different dates are as follows:

First Letter to Laurier.
Edmonton, Alta., March 20, 1911.

On the fifth day of December last a resolution was passed in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, commencing the government of the province for entering into negotiations with the government of Canada relative to a measure of control of the public domain of the province and advising the government of this province to continue further negotiations in the matter.

The resolution is as follows: "That the government of the province of Alberta do enter into negotiations with the government of Canada relative to a measure of control of the public domain of the province and advising the government of this province to continue further negotiations in the matter."

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Alberta and Saskatchewan control of the public domain has been retained, viz., all lands and tracts in respect thereof, mines, minerals and royalties, including shares, timber, streams and water rights, etc.

In all the debate and negotiations leading to confederation it was undoubtedly the intention of the framers of the constitution that the government of the Northwest Territories should be a residual control whereby it was not to be a mere agent of the Dominion of Canada.

As set forth in the order in council of May 26th, 1881, addressed in reply to the application of the province of Manitoba for control of the public lands situated therein, the parliament of Canada in 1881 solemnly set aside some million acres of these lands to be reserved for the use of the province.

Parliament, to quote the order in council, May 26th, 1881, again, "pledged its faith to the world that a large portion of these lands should be reserved for the use of the province of Manitoba, and another portion be held in trust for the education of the children of the province."

The great attraction which the Dominion has heretofore offered has been the unreserved lands for the grant and that it had been receiving, transporting and placing the same on the land.

The potency of these observations in favor of continuance of the policy has passed away. It is felt at the present time even by those who prominently supported the retention of the public domain by the Federal Government in the past, that the Dominion has arrived in the history of Western Canada when the reasons cited before no longer apply.

If we consider the position of the province of Alberta we find that it is growing in wealth and population by leaps and bounds. At the time the Alberta Act was passed the population was not more than 275,000, and the course of another year or two will undoubtedly reach 500,000.

The opening up of much new agricultural land and the consequent strain upon the revenue of the province which only of proportion to the increase in population is a serious matter.

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(Continued from Page 8)

It is possible to receive abundant reasons in support of the claim of the government of Alberta, but it may be sufficient to observe that the government has never thought that

It is beyond question that the reason which caused this departure in the land tenure of Manitoba thus early in the history of the Dominion was that the lands in that Province were large.

R. L. BORDEN.
Hon. Arthur L. Sifton,
Premier of Alberta,
Edmonton, Alta.

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